

A Message to Newly Appointed Ethiopian Prime Minister

From United Sidama Parties for Freedom and Justice (USPFJ)

Ethiopia's newly-appointed Prime Minister Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn was sworn in on September 21, 2012 in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. Mixed opinions and reactions are pouring in from Ethiopians of all walks of life within the country and from the Diaspora. Numerous Ethiopians believe that, if the new PM takes the decision to be brave enough to think and act as a mature politician whose personal interest is put aside for the interest of the majority in the country, then there will be hope for all Ethiopians. He has before him the opportunity of establishing institutions that safeguard genuine democracy, freedom of expression and an independent system that accommodates and learns from divergent political opinions that will guarantee a respect for people's rights to hopes and opinions both individually and collectively, and which will guarantee that his name be well-remembered.

Whilst his predecessor entertained a sham democracy that hardly existed during his entire tenure, the majority of Ethiopians cautiously think positively for the future of the country. The serious concern of all Ethiopians in general, and the Sidama nation in particular, is the new PM's plan to continue without change of the system that his predecessor had set up, including oppressive legislations that stifle freedom of expression, a single party, total lack of accountability of its authorities, and an absence of independent judiciary systems.

Although the aforementioned ambitious wishes remain to be witnessed in the near future; we can't ignore the discontent and competition, in particular from the TPLF's authorities who are surreptitiously following his every move. These challenges remain widespread. The dimension of these challenges (if he is actually able to be in charge of the country and the EPRDF) remains profoundly deep and multi-directional, if he chooses not to or is unable to change the status-quo. The Sidama people call upon him to replace the system that violates its constitution to effect a change in the status-quo and bring about reasonable and praiseworthy change.

Despite the unavoidable difficulties the new PM is likely to face, the majority of the Sidama people and Ethiopians cautiously believe that if he exercises his power there is still an opportunity for him to make the aforementioned principles a reality, which are present and taken for granted in every mature democracy. The Sidama people call upon him and expect him to act courageously and boldly to make democracy and democratic principles, which have been nationally craved these past 21 years, a part of Ethiopians' present lives, high and low alike. If the new PM acts bravely and boldly to be different from his predecessor and casts out the authoritarian dictatorship which global players have been hoodwinked into blindly misjudging, then Ethiopia and its people can move a step forward, a great many steps, and his name would become celebrated.

Therefore, the Sidama nation along with all others, awaits the new PM's appointments cautiously, hoping that past grievances and sufferings, great though they are, can be set aside and replaced with a brighter future for all.

The Sidama nation sees his premiership optimistically should he proceed on a course of genuine freedom, democracy and an all inclusive government - should he wish to be praised by all the peoples of Ethiopia.

In his pursuing such a course, there are many Sidama civilians unlawfully under arrest and a long-overdue quest for regional self administration in Sidamaland. The United Sidama Parties for Freedom and Justice (USPFJ) calls upon the new PM to earn ours and everyone's gratitude by releasing these people along with all the many political prisoners at national level, who are all, to a man, unlawfully arrested on false fabrications. We urge the new PM to invite for dialogue the Diaspora opposition parties, whose members have been intimidated and terrorized and forced to flee the country, and to create the all-inclusive government that all seek, where people are able to express their hopes without fear or intimidation, where direction and goals alike are achieved by listening carefully to diverging ideas.

Such a progressive course would light up Ethiopia with the praise of every person inside Ethiopia, and from all the countries in the world around.

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